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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Relocation of a Marine Aircraft Group from Japan to Okinawa (S)

As a result of the continuing effort within the Department of the Navy to reduce the adverse balance of payments associated with operation of Naval forces overseas, without reduction of combat readiness, I would like to propose a relocation of certain Marine units in the Western Pacific. You will recollect the discussion on this subject with General SHOUP following his return from WESTPAC in early October. Specifically, I recommend the following relocations:

- a. Marine Aircraft Group-12 (MAG-12, the attack group of the First Marine Aircraft Wing) from Iwakuni, Japan to Kadena AFB, Okinawa.
- b. One fighter squadron of Marine Aircraft Group-11 (MAG-11) from NAS, Atsugi, Japan to Kadena.
- c. A Marine Air Control Squadron of MAG-11 from Atsugi to Kadena.
- d. MAG-11 with its remaining two fighter squadrons from Atsugi to Iwakuni.
- e. The return to a dollar area of the extremely sensitive Navy LST now at Iwakuni (TOP SECRET).

This move would improve the overall performance and posture of the WESTPAC Marine Division/Wing Team, would provide for an appreciable reduction in our balance of payments deficit (approximately 2 million dollars), and would eliminate what has long been a potential major international political issue in a most sensitive area.

NAS, Atsugi, has, in the past, been an operationally satisfactory base for Marine Aircraft Group-11 (MAG-11) with its three Fighter Squadrons operating afterburner aircraft. However, in recent years the encroachment of civilian populace and increasing saturation of air space has severely reduced the suitability of the area for training. For example: no live ordnance is permitted to be carried from NAS, Atsugi except for actual air defense scrambles; carrier landing practice

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is severely restricted (maximum of two aircraft airborne at any one time); no night jet flying or jet engine turn-ups after 2200 hours is authorized for other than air defense scrambles. These operating conditions have required MAG-11 squadrons to deploy periodically to Okinawa and the Philippines for weapons and carrier qualification training. This restricted operational environment is being further complicated by programmed increases in Air Force units to be based at nearby Yokota AFB. Civil air traffic passing through the area is also increasing and adversely affects utilization of available airspace. This is not to imply that the Atsugi area is unacceptable for training and operations, rather the problems outlined restrict the tactical aircraft of the Navy and Marine Corps. Satisfactory carrier and ordnance training for patrol and carrier ASW aircraft are conducted at Kisarazu (across Tokyo Bay) Outlying Field. This airfield with 6,000 feet of runway restricts training and operations with fighter type aircraft.

In addition to the deteriorating operational environment described above, billeting facilities for enlisted Marines are overcrowded to such an extent that they are below acceptable hygienic standards. For example, each enlisted Marine has approximately 40 square feet for living area compared to the DOD design criterion of 130 square feet. Introduction of the more sophisticated F-4, in lieu of the F-8, which commenced on 1 November 1963, as replacement aircraft in the three squadrons assigned to MAG-11, will increase the billeting requirements by 78 officers and 301 enlisted. Although the trend in these conditions was apparent as far back as July 1960, when NAS, Atsugi, submitted its first request for additional billeting, other priorities in Navy MCON have delayed budgetary action until FY-1965. The Navy FY-1965 MCON Budget now includes \$762,000 for barracks to accommodate 498 enlisted men. If approved, this will meet about one-half of the presently existing billet deficiencies at this station. However, this new construction would not be available for another two or three years.

I have examined an alternative basing of MAG-11 at MCAS, Iwakuni, but I find billeting facilities equally as crowded as Atsugi. Although \$679,000 was appropriated in FY-1963 for barracks to accommodate 498 personnel at Iwakuni, the mid-summer gold flow issue resulted in a suspension of construction. However, even considering this additional billeting space as being available at Iwakuni, it would only partially satisfy the current on-base requirements.

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I consider the movement of these Marine Aircraft Groups, with the readjustment of fighter and attack squadrons, to be practical and desirable for the following reasons:

a. These Marines are on unaccompanied tours; the relocations would not have a serious impact on morale and would not require funds for moving dependents. In addition, facilities and services attendant to the presence of dependents overseas are not required.

b. Relocation of MAG-12 to Okinawa would materially improve coordination and training between units of the Third Marine Division/First Marine Aircraft Wing Team.

c. An annual reduction of approximately \$2 million (\$1.6 for Marine units and \$.4 for Navy LST) in adverse gold flow would be realized from these relocations.

d. Responsiveness to contingency requirements in Southeast Asia would be materially improved by this move of a major unit much closer to probable employment areas.

e. The fighter and attack squadrons relocated on Okinawa would be approximately 800 miles closer to instrumented bombing and gunnery ranges in the Philippines where they frequently deploy for training.

f. The air defense posture of Japan would not be markedly degraded.

g. The removal of the Navy LST would eliminate what has long been a potential major political issue in a most sensitive area.

h. The U. S. Air Force has indicated that space for an additional 75 aircraft is available at Kadena (JCSM 276-63 of 6 April 1963, Appendix page 17) but additional funds would be required to insure continued effective operation. The funds now required for increased billeting facilities at Atsugi could provide a source for a portion of the added facilities required at Kadena and would optimize utilization of U. S. airbase structure in the Western Pacific.

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The Fleet Commanders concur in the proposed moves. I believe that CINCPAC would interpose no objections providing that the relocations do not involve concomitant moves of Air Force units from Okinawa.

In summary, the moves would improve response time for the Third Division/First Marine Aircraft Wing Team, reduce the flow of gold, improve combat readiness training, relieve a progressively deteriorating operational environment and serious billeting problem at NAS, Atsugi and remove a potentially serious political problem which could otherwise arise over the presence of the LST at Iwakuni. All of the foregoing benefits would accrue without degradation of the combat readiness of our forward deployed forces.

The military construction costs that would be required on Okinawa for this move cannot be determined without consultation with the U. S. Air Force. I can estimate gross costs assuming that complete facilities in support of this move would be required, however, this would be unrealistic in view of existing facilities which may be available or which could be jointly used by the tenant and host organizations. Therefore, this memorandum is requesting your concurrence in principle for this move, after which I will proceed with the Air Force to determine the accurate costs involved, recognizing, of course, that a final decision would be contingent upon an acceptable cost associated with this move.

Paul H. Witze

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